



PRESS RELEASE

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CEREMONY MARKS 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK

PHOENIX – In a ceremony here today, U.S. Attorney Paul K. Charlton marked the 25th Anniversary of National Crime Victims' Rights Week. In the past 25 years, thousands of people have been victimized by crime - women battered, children abused, men and women assaulted, countless people murdered, and an entire nation devastated by senseless acts of terrorism against our people. Twenty five years ago, President Ronald Reagan declared the first National Crime Victims' Rights Week. And now these victims and survivors of crime continue to be honored as Congress passed the Justice For All Act which grants new rights to victims of federal crime, including the right to speak at release or detention hearings of defendants, the right to be present at the trial of a defendant and the ability to enforce these rights through the right to appeal a court's actions in some cases. Charlton said in his remarks today, "As we pay tribute to crime victims and those who dedicate their lives to helping them, our shared challenge is to realize that justice isn't served until crime victims are, that justice isn't served until victims' rights and services are not just celebrated annually, but practiced every day."

Steve Twist, recognized in today's ceremony, has spent the past 27 years successfully advocating for stronger legal protections for crime victims. As Counsel to the Majority in the Arizona House of Representatives from 1976 to 1978, he drafted the state's new criminal code, which included the state's first victims' rights laws. In 1980, as the state's Chief Assistant Attorney General, he established the nation's first Victim Witness Division based in an Attorney General's Office. Over the next several years, he worked to promote passage of several victims' rights laws. Mr. Twist also established a statewide coalition of victim advocates called Arizona Voice for Crime Victims. He has given victims access to much needed legal aid by founding the Victims Legal Assistance Project, in partnership with the Arizona State University College of Law, and by helping to found the National Crime Victims

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Law Institute. Mr. Twist has testified many times since 1996 on behalf of a federal constitutional amendment and has spoken in support of the amendment across the country and was instrumental in the passage of the new federal Justice For All Act.

Also recognized in today's ceremony were individuals in the criminal justice community who work with victims' families.

- Special Agents Mike Huerta, Ruben Garcia and Ted Huffman from the Drug Enforcement Administration were honored for their 10 years of hard work and dedication to finding and arresting the killers of DEA Special Agent Richard Fass. On June 30, 1994, Agent Fass was murdered during an undercover operation. In the aftermath of that murder, four suspects were identified and three were arrested in short order. Those three were tried and convicted in Maricopa County Superior court for Fass' murder. The fourth suspect, Augustin Vasquez-Mendoza, fled to Mexico. Over the next 10 years, these three agents worked tirelessly to find Vasquez-Mendoza and have him extradited to the U.S. This came to fruition when Vasquez-Mendoza was extradited to Arizona on January 29, 2005. He is now facing murder charges in Maricopa County Superior Court. Through all of this, the agents kept in contact with Fass' widow and family to let them know the status of the investigation and prosecution. They continue to meet with the family and give them hope that justice for Fass' murder will finally be achieved.
- Special Agent Michael Conrad, FBI Phoenix, was honored for his hard work on behalf of minor victims of interstate trafficking. Since arriving in Phoenix in June 1998, Agent Conrad's work at FBI has concentrated on these cases and has taken a proactive approach. He has compiled a referral list to assist juvenile victims of interstate trafficking and sexual exploitation, he has worked with various agencies trying to locate services for these victims and he has joined the Arizonans for the Protection of Exploited Children and Adults (APECA) and Arizona League to End Regional Trafficking (ALERT) in his efforts. Agent Conrad has met, and continues to meet, with social service agencies in his effort to direct resources to these victims. His work has had a positive effect on not only the prosecution of these cases, but on the treatment of these victims.
- Special Agent Nick Manns, FBI Gallup, New Mexico has worked in the Gallup FBI office for three years investigating crimes occurring on the Navajo Indian Reservation. During that time, Agent Manns has made extraordinary efforts on behalf of crime victims. He routinely takes the time to explain the investigative and judicial process to victims. He has an especially strong bond with victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse - discussing with many victims a way to make better choices in their lives and

giving them strength and support so that they can face their abusers in court. Agent Manns has also worked tirelessly with the Navajo Nation, including their law enforcement officers, to stop the use and sale of methamphetamine on the reservation. Agent Manns recognizes the impact the use of this drug has on crime on the reservation and has participated, at the request of the Navajo Nation, in educating communities about the impact of methamphetamine. Agent Manns goes above and beyond the call of duty on a daily basis to make life better for the victims he deals with and all members of the Navajo Nation.

- Victim Advocate Marlene Beall from the U.S. Attorney's Office in Phoenix was honored for her extraordinary efforts on two different cases. Both cases involved brutal murders and were proceeding through the court system at the same time. Contrary to the wish of some victims, the government sought the death penalty. During all of this, Ms. Beall provided much needed support to the families. The sentencing/penalty phase of these cases were, in some ways, more difficult than the trials. Ms. Beall explained the process to the families and gave them strength to sit through a terribly emotional process and did an outstanding job even though these were her first cases since joining the office.

Another annual tradition is to remember those whose lives have been cut short due to crime. This tradition recognizes that the impact of violent crime is real and its effect is lasting. Memorial plaques are dedicated each year and bare the face, the name, the dates of birth and death of an individual who's life was cut short by a crime of violence. Memorial plaques were dedicated today in memory of Elliot Lee Nez, Billie Jean Noline and William Gregory Dillard II.

Photographs may be available upon request to the U.S. Attorney's Office. Interviews with victims' family members may also be arranged by contacting Sandy Raynor at 602-514-7625.

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